

DOI 10.14746/ssp.2017.4.3

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## Proponents of Euroscepticism in the United Kingdom from 1950 to 2017

**Abstract:** The author of this article explores the issues of the Proponents of Euroscepticism in the UK from 1950 to 2017. The researcher claims that Winston Churchill was the first Eurosceptic Prime Minister. The author believes that Euroscepticism is not related to any political party, but is a non-party phenomenon, not linked to a particular ideology. However, the researcher concludes that the biggest number of Eurosceptics in the UK can be found among the Conservatives. In addition, in his study, the author identifies the main theorist of contemporary British Euroscepticism as well as the moderate and radical types of Euroscepticism.

**Key words:** European Union, Euroscepticism, Brexit

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The idea of a united Europe gained special significance and was actively discussed in the academic and political circles of Europe after the Second World War. In spite of enthusiasts, this idea also attracted sceptics and opponents. The British were the most sceptical politicians regarding European integration processes. Therefore, the aim of this article is to identify the adherents of Euroscepticism in the United Kingdom between 1950 and 2017 and to study the ideological foundations of their Eurosceptic positions. The main methods applied in this study are historical and comparative methods as well as analysis. The author investigates the problem taking into consideration the positions of the leaders of the government, ruling parties and opposition in the UK, so an institutional approach is fundamental in this study.

In the postwar era in the UK, Winston Churchill (UK Prime Minister, 1940–1945 and 1951–1955) was one of the main inspirers of the creation of a “United States of Europe” (Heywood, 2003, p. 131). However, despite his calls for the creation of a united Europe, he demonstrated moderate Euroscepticism, in particular concerning Britain’s participation in this process. He, as well as French leader Charles de Gaulle, believed Britain to be too far from Europe, not only geographically but also mentally. Once,

Churchill argued with de Gaulle, saying that Britain would always choose the sea, when the need arose to choose between Europe and the open sea (Johnson, 2015, p. 229). Paradoxically, on the one hand, Churchill was sceptical about European integration, and on the other hand, he was a supporter of it and advocated the formation of a united Europe. The role of Great Britain in this process was seen by him as a guarantor or a witness, but not directly as a member or a participant: we are with Europe, but we are not Europe (Johnson, 2015, p. 229).

Churchill was “euroenthusiastic” as was Labour (Watts, Pilkington, 2005, pp. 17–24). However, he did not initiate the filing of an application of the United Kingdom for joining the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC) established in 1951, when he was Prime Minister of UK from 1951–1955. Obviously, he had some doubts as to the expediency of Britain’s participation in the unification, and sceptical about the further need for Britain to join it. Britain “wanted to look like an important part of Europe, but without joining it” (Watts, Pilkington, 2005, pp. 17–24). Consequently, Churchill can be considered as a Eurosceptic who did not want Britain to become part of Europe, but in every way supported the processes of European integration without the involvement of the UK.

Despite the fact that the Eurosceptic Churchill was a conservative, his attitude to a united Europe was shared by members of the Labour Party. France invited the United Kingdom to join the negotiations with Germany, Italy and Benelux to establish a supranational association that would manage the common European markets of coal and steel at the dawn of the creation of the European Coal and Steel Community in 1950. It was supposed that the ECSC would be the supreme governing body – the germ of the European Commission. It was also planned to create an assembly of national parliamentarians and a council of national ministers – a prototype of the European Parliament and the Council of the EU respectively, as well as establish a judicial body, the forerunner of the European Court. Thus, Britain was asked to contribute to the very birth of the European Union. But then Prime Minister and leader of the Labour Party, Clement Attlee (premier, 1945–1951; party leader, 1935–1955), opposed Britain’s engagement in the establishment of the ECSC.

Despite the scepticism of Attlee, the Foreign Minister, Labour MP Ernest Bevin, who had the right and duty to represent the UK at such congresses, was positively inclined to cooperate with European countries, so it was probable that Britain would join the creation of a united Europe (Pedler, 2015, pp. 55–61). But, Bevin, due to illness, had to resign liter-

ally a month before the conclusion of the Paris Treaty, on April 14, 1951. Then, the Eurosceptic Attlee appointed Herbert Morrison as Minister of Foreign Affairs, who was also against his country's participation in the European integration processes. Together with Attlee, they refused to participate in the Paris Conference 1951, and the reason for that was that Britain was still the largest producer of coal and steel in Europe, so there was no need felt in Britain for that union.

The situation was perfect for the Eurosceptic Labour Party then. It is unclear whether Bevin really fell ill, or whether it was a well-thought-out action by the radical Eurosceptic Attlee. Besides, the so-called sick condition of the key minister on this issue was probably not the main factor that influenced the refusal to participate in the creation of the ECSC. The factor was the desire of the British to maintain economic independence and, more importantly, insufficient understanding of the significance of the new organization (Gabel, 2016).

It is also the case that ideological factors had an influence on their anti-ECSC position. To be more precise, Attlee and Morrison were British left-wing nationalists, which bordered upon socialism (Bew, 2016). They advocated the nationalization of key industries and utilities and the creation of a welfare state (Jenkins, 2011). According to Canadian historian David Churchill, left-wing nationalists are the opponents of any empires (Churchill, 2012, pp. 227–260). This is said to be the reason why Attlee and Morrison opposed the accession of Britain to the ECSC, which, in their view, was a potential imperial threat. Morrison, for example, was convinced that if Britain joined the ECSC, it would mean the end of Britain as an independent state (Churchill, 2012, pp. 227–260). At the same time, Attlee's aversion to empires is also confirmed by the fact that he was one of Britain's first Prime Ministers who promoted the idea of giving independence to India. Hence, we can call him the curator of the beginning of the dismantling of the British Empire.

Regardless of the UK's negative response, the European integration process successfully moved forward. The second stage of the formation of the common market began in 1955. At that time, the Prime Minister of Great Britain was the Conservative Anthony Eden (Prime Minister, 1955–1957), who was a bigger Eurosceptic than his party colleague Churchill. Without doubt, this adversely affected further communication between the UK and the ECSC. The Eurosceptic Eden rejected the proposal when Britain again received an invitation from the ECSC to join the community in 1955. He, as well as his political opponents, believed

that the ECSC would turn into a supra-state entity, therefore, according to him, it would be better for Britain to avoid such an opportunity (Forster, 2002, pp. 19–20).

Labour MP Hugh Gaitskell was firmly convinced of this position, too. He was elected to the British Parliament from the Labour Party in 1945. He headed the British Ministry of Fuel and Energy between 1947 and 1950 and then the Ministry of Finance from 1950–1951. As a Minister of Finance, Gaitskell claimed that joining a united Europe could mean the end of the UK as an independent state, which, in his opinion, would mean the end of a thousand years of history (Nechaiuk, 2013, p. 31). He noted that by joining the creation of the ECSC, “Britain will not even be bigger than Texas or California in the United States of Europe” (Black, 2015, p. 344). As leader of the opposition Labour Party (1955–1963), Gaitskell expressed his categorical disagreement about the potential accession of Britain to the Common Market, arguing that there were no convincing economic benefits (Gaitskell, 1962, pp. 3–23). Obviously, at that time, the key criterion of Euroscepticism, in particular for Labour, was the actual economic grounds. Gaitskell was convinced that Britain had a much more favorable position outside the European Economic Community (EEC) than if it were its member.

The United Kingdom did not become a member of the ECSC in the 1950s because of the excessively pessimistic position of government leaders and sometimes even their uncertainty about the unity of Europe. Furthermore, Euroscepticism was characteristic not only of Labour and the Conservatives, but of these two ideological party camps. Yet claiming absolute Euroscepticism of the Conservatives or Labour would be incorrect. For example, at the beginning of European integration, Conservative Prime Minister Harold Macmillan (1957–1963), Labour Harold Wilson (1964–1970 and 1974–1976), Conservative Edward Heath (1970–1974) and Labour James Callaghan (1976–1979) were all supporters of the participation of the UK in the ECSC and EEC.

The Labour Government, led by Callaghan (1976–1979) during the crisis period in the mid-1970s was unable to govern the state, and lost the 1979 election. He was replaced by a new leader, Margaret Thatcher (1979–1990). Before becoming Prime Minister in 1979 and signing the Single European Act in 1986, Margaret Thatcher, when she was leader of the Conservative party (1975–1979), advocated British membership of the EEC, and agitated for that during a referendum in June 1975 (Canadine, 2017, pp. 97–100).

But over time, the European project disappointed her. The risk of excessive federalization of a united Europe was the main reason for that (Cannadine, 2017, pp. 97–100). For this reason, Thatcher noted in the “Sunday Times” that over the past thirty years Britain’s policy had leant toward a collectivist society, which was the most annoying fact (Sabov, 1989, pp. 8–9). The “Iron Lady” was sharply opposed to excessive state interference (which did not produce the desired results), bureaucracy, cumbersome systems of social services, unification and regimentation of social life, the limiting of individual opportunities, etc. (Sabov, 1989, pp. 8–9). Taking this into consideration, her radical, Eurosceptic attitude towards an excessively bureaucratic and centralized united Europe becomes quite clear. Her famous Bruges speech in 1988 greatly changed the public discourse on European integration within Britain and became an example for a new generation of Eurosceptics.

With the complete rejection of the idea of a United States of Europe, Thatcher sharply criticized everybody who favored the trend of European integration, largely because of her categorical position about centralization in the EU. Thatcher was against the creation of a super-state with its center in Brussels. She was not an adversary of European integration processes and the EEC as a whole, but she negatively referred to all threats to the national security and identity of the United Kingdom (Cannadine, 2017, pp. 100–111). Those were the increase in the number of illegal immigrants, the rise of terrorism and the spread of drugs, which would increase even more with the creation of the EU (Thatcher, 1988). This is not surprising, because in 1984, having participated in the annual party conference in Brighton, she avoided her own death when terrorists from the Irish Republican Army (IRA) attacked the hotel where the entire leadership of the Tory was staying (Sabov, 1989, p. 11).

At the time many members of the Conservative Party, including her ally Norman Tebbit, suffered. In line with these and other issues of national security in Britain, in 1985, when the Schengen agreement was signed, which included the removal of border controls for all member countries of the EEC and some non-members, the United Kingdom did not join. In the 1980s, Thatcher’s attitude towards European integration processes was “antagonistic” then (Sabov, 1989, p. 16).

There were two key themes in Thatcher’s attitude to a united Europe: she was a Eurosceptic in the questions of moderate European integration processes, but was an anti-European in the question of the creation of a supranational united Europe (Wester, 1992, p. 193). Therefore, when the

issue of the creation of the European Union arose, she categorically opposed it, having claimed that “Maastricht is yesterday’s idea” (Thatcher, 1992) and having said “no, no, no” to management from Brussels (Kampen, 2013). Thatcher was convinced that the EU project would act against British interests and would be a destructive force for British parliamentary democracy (Hughes, 2016).

Eventually, Britain became one of the founders of the European Union in its present form in February 1992, despite the warnings and fears of Thatcher. At that time, Prime Minister of Britain was the leader of the Conservative Party, former Minister of Foreign Affairs and Chancellor of the Treasury in the government of Margaret Thatcher, John Major (Prime Minister, 1990–1997).

Unlike his predecessor, Major supported the further European integration of Britain, which he confirmed by signing the Maastricht Treaty on the founding of the EU. However, this did not happen without the expression of moderate scepticism from him. Addressing MPs in the British Parliament in 1992, Major stated that by joining the EU, the United Kingdom retained a number of special rights and opportunities, according to which their country would not become a hostage to the EU, and that it, in turn, would not be transformed into federated Europe, which Major categorically rejected (Major, 2010, p. 90). Moreover, as the Prime Minister stated, he was under pressure from other member states to agree to take foreign policy decisions with the principle of a majority vote. He didn’t want Britain to accept the decision that do not correspond to its interests. This is said to be the reason why he defended the idea of an absolute majority (Major, 2010, p. 90). However, despite the attempts by the then head of government to justify his decision, he was not supported by his Conservative Party, whereas the majority of the Labour Party agreed with the decision of Major, which was repeatedly confirmed by the statements of its leadership (Bevins, 1993). That is, the opposition, led by Neil Kinnock (leader of the Labour Party, 1983–1992), supported the European integration intentions of the conservative John Major.

On the contrary, some conservative MPs, the so-called “Maastricht rebels,” who didn’t agree with the decision by Major, went on to more radical measures and, in May 1992, committed sabotage in the British Parliament during the ratification of the Maastricht Treaty (Cowley, 2016, pp. 9–10). Their number was rather insignificant – 22 persons, but this was enough to halt the process of the European integration of Britain for a certain time. The most active and persistent among the “Maastricht

rebels” were Iain Duncan Smith, Barry Legg and Walter Sweeney (Cowley, 2016, p. 7). But the list of opponents of the European integration of Britain is not limited by these individuals. Persistent Eurosceptics included Peter Lilley, Michael Portillo and Michael Howard. Portillo was the most radical and influential among them (Watts, 2005, p. 125). In spite of the official policy of the government, Portillo felt extremely free in expressing anti-European positions. This is not surprising, since he was a fervent follower of Thatcherism, as he himself repeatedly stated (Portillo, 2013).

Anthony Heath believed that the squall of criticism about Major was not caused by the fact that he signed the Maastricht Treaty, but by its bad content (Heath, 2011, pp. 683–685). In this context, it is worth pointing out that, despite his positive opinion of European integration, Major did not idealize the Maastricht Treaty and even criticized the so-called “The Social Protocol” (or the Social Chapter), according to which “a socialist nightmare of regulation and corporativeness” could begin (Williams, 1993). So, he was not a blind Eurointegrator, but pragmatically evaluated the capabilities of Britain as a member of the EU. The head of government, along with some Labour party members and Conservatives, feared that if Britain joined the Social Chapter of the Maastricht Treaty, unemployment would increase significantly, and the closure of many businesses would be inevitable, which would have had a tragic effect on the economy of the country (Williams, 1993).

However, Major accepted compromises and called for the revision of the Treaty’s principles in order to ratify it. On the contrary, part of the Conservatives did not accept the Maastricht agreement at all. The rational pragmatism of Major’s foreign policy provides reasons to identify him as a pedantic Europeanist and, at the same time, a moderate Eurosceptic, who wanted the United Kingdom to join the EU, without becoming its victim.

Later, in his memoirs, Major remembered that those “Maastricht rebels” had the full support of Thatcher and of one of the leaders of the Conservative Party from 1985–1987, Norman Tebbit (Major, 2010, pp. 264–271). The latter had ambiguous views on the EU. Once he said: “I agree that we do not want to leave the EU, but we must manipulate and block all of its solutions that do not meet our needs. A veto on everything that the EU does not approve of, or anything we disapprove of” (Wyatt, 2000, pp. 437–438).

It is obvious that such behavior by any member of the EU would lead to a permanent crisis in the functioning of the EU. It is quite clear that



Tebbit held the view of Euroscepticism, based on the categorical rejection of the single currency and potential creation of EU citizenship. But interestingly, he did not call for a renunciation of Britain's membership of the EU (Crowson, 2007, pp. 55–60). The British Parliament ratified the Maastricht Treaty (Haycock, 1993) without joining the Social Chapter (Lourie, 1997, pp. 7–8) on August 3, 1993, despite political obstacles. When the question of Britain's joining the Social Chapter arose again, Major did not change his attitude towards it and called it “a Trojan horse” at the end of his government term in 1997 (Gilman, 1997).

It is rather interesting that the Conservative party did not have a clear position on the European integration of Britain. For instance, Major kept the majority on his side, despite having suffered much criticism from his party members. The result of the leadership election, when Major announced his resignation in 1995, is confirmation of this. Then, his opponent was the conservative, Eurosceptic John Redwood. As a result of the election, the latter gained the support of 89 party members, while Major, as much as 218. It is obvious that the Eurosceptics of the Conservative Party at that time were, as Major said, in the “small minority” (Cowley, 2016, p. 18).

Redwood's fiasco, however, did not mean he lost influence on UK politics. Quite the contrary, he remained a rather influential Eurosceptic not only on the political stage, but also in academic circles and the mass media. He categorically opposed the idea of a European superstate and a single currency in the EU (Heathcoat-Amory, 2012, pp. 87–88). At the end of the 1990s, the politician was convinced that the formation of a single currency in the EU would lead to the collapse of Britain (Redwood, 1999, pp. 163–173). Redwood can be considered an “archetypal conservative Eurosceptic” (Bennet, 2016, pp. 3–5). Indeed, in his books *Our currency. Our country: the dangers of the European Monetary Union* (Redwood, 1997), *The Death of Britain?* (Redwood, 1999) and *Just say no! 100 Arguments Against the Euro* (Redwood, 2001) Redwood actively advocated Euroscepticism and appealed to British politicians to oppose certain aspects of European integration.

For example, he agitated to reject the “Stability and Growth Pact,” which was intended to guarantee the compliance of countries participating in Economic and Monetary Union with fiscal policies after the introduction of a single currency in the EU (Redwood, 1997, p. 207). Redwood negatively perceived that fact that EU institutions, in particular the European Court, had more power than national authorities (Redwood,



1999, p. 28; 78). He was convinced that having given the Court the role of interpreting EU treaties made it a supranational body that negatively reflected the status of EU member states.

Since the books by Redwood, as well as his own political activities, were aimed at criticizing the EU and Britain's European integration, then he should be recognized as one of the theorists of contemporary British Euroscepticism. The idea of a single currency in the EU, which he fundamentally rejected, was the source of Redwood's Euroscepticism. He was a passionate supporter of the foreign policy style of Thatcher, who was also cautious about the super-state ideas of the transformation of the EU. This is said to be the reason why Owen Bennett called Redwood "the beloved son of Margaret Thatcher" (Bennet, 2016, pp. 5–6).

The 1997 parliamentary elections were catastrophic (Turner, 2000, p. 221) for the Conservatives and led them into opposition, as the Labour Party, led by Europhile Tony Blair (leader of the party from 1994–2007), gained more support. After the resignation of Major, Redwood ran for Conservative party leader, but was again defeated, taking third place (Heathcoat-Amory, 2012, p. 87). The Eurosceptic and anti-EU William Hague became party leader. Redwood considered him weak in confronting the EU, since at that time Hague recognized the possibility of the European Parliament ruling over national democracies, which was against the interests of Britain (Baimbridge, Whyman, Mullen, 2016, pp. 94–96).

Nevertheless, Hague should not be identified as a pro-European politician, but rather as a moderate Eurosceptic. He, like Redwood, was categorically opposed to the introduction of a single currency in the EU, and even tried to oust pro-European Conservatives from the party on several occasions. For example, Hague conducted an intra-party survey on the attitude of party members to the Euro currency in 1998. The results showed that 85% of respondents supported the leader's policy (Baimbridge, Whyman, Mullen, 2016, p. 95). According to Hague's plan, the other 15% should have been deprived of the right to run for Parliament from the Conservative Party in the future. Then, for pro-European Conservatives, a period of isolation began (Turner, 2000, p. 220). One of Hague's tasks was to minimize the influence of those Tories on party politics. Despite this, the issue from time to time caused controversy among the Conservatives, but did not lead to radicalism.

In such a manner, Hague became the opposition to the pro-European policy of new Prime Minister Tony Blair (1997–2007) and the Labour Party in general. In addition to Party motives, Hague's Euroscepticism was based

on his fears of collective taxation in the EU, the convergence of economic and security policies, and the potential federative direction of EU development (Turner, 2000, p. 221). If the latter had been implemented, then Hague would have seen two options for a British response: either the suspension of European integration processes (Baimbridge, Whyman, Mullen, 2016, p. 94), or exit from the EU in general (MacShane, 2015, p. 108).

Therefore, most Conservatives under the leadership of Hague refrained from voting during all three readings when the process of ratification of the Amsterdam Treaty in the British Parliament took place in 1997. The leader of the Conservative Party believed that European integration should have its limits, and this, in his opinion, had already been achieved in 1997 (Holmes, 1998, pp. 133–140). Under such conditions, in his view, the EU was moving in the wrong direction for Britain. This position was motivated by the fact that, as Hague noted, the EU had two major problems: excessive interference in national affairs and regulation of all spheres of life. Instead, according to Hague, EU member states should build a free and flexible Europe.

So, his Euroscepticism was based on the fear that the deepening of political integration in the EU would lead to a state where accountability and democracy would become unmanageable and lose meaning (Holmes, 1999). Also Hague categorically rejected any option for the formation of an EU Army (Baimbridge, Whyman, Mullen, 2016, p. 95).

Hague was a constructive Eurosceptic who offered an alternative to what he criticized. He thought that because the British firmly believed that Britain's place was within the European Union, then politicians should work to make this Union "correct." According to his vision, this should be a European Union which does less, but does it better, rather than "clinging to commissions" of the EU, which challenge democratic government (Holmes, 1999). It should be emphasized that even at critical moments of its existence, Hague did not agitate for Britain to leave the EU. For example, the Conservative leader emphasized that Britain should remain in the ranks of the EU, but not accept the Euro as its currency, when the issue of the introduction of a single currency in the EU became the agenda of European politics (Baimbridge, Whyman, Mullen, 2016, p. 94). Hague resigned when the Labour Party again formed the government after the parliamentary elections in which the Conservative Party received a minority of votes in 2001.

In the same year, Iain Duncan Smith became the Conservative leader (2001–2003). He, with the support of the authoritative Thatcher, con-

tinued the radical Eurosceptic policy of his predecessor. His hostility to the EU was the main factor why he won the election (MacShane, 2015, p. 111). Despite the fact that Smith was the leader of the opposition only briefly, in British politics he is famous as a prominent Eurosceptic. According to Anthony Foster, during the reign of Smith, Euroscepticism became the official policy of the Conservative Party (Forster, 2003, p. 143). Moreover, he was one of the most active “Maastricht rebels,” as already mentioned (Geddes, 2013, p. 239). The Euroscepticism of the new conservative leader was manifested to a great extent in his disapproval of Britain’s potential accession to the Eurozone (Lynch, 2012, pp. 74–88). He also had the idea of preventing Conservatives from taking part in the European Parliament elections, in order to demonstrate his negative attitude towards a United Europe, but none of the party members supported that idea (Butler, 2005, pp. 84–85).

It should be noted that Smith did not differ from other Eurosceptics, since he clearly and unbreakably continued the policy of Thatcher and his predecessor, Hague, but in a more radical form. Many members of Smith’s party considered him to be non-charismatic and indecisive in his attitude towards the EU, to which he often replied: “Do not underestimate the determination of a quiet man” (Wayne, 2002). Nevertheless, due to the lack of consolidation within the party, the Conservatives chose a new leader – the Eurosceptic Michael Howard in 2003 (leader of the party from 2003–2005).

Howard, as well as Smith, was a follower of Thatcherism in relation to the EU (Fisher, 2014, p. 216). What is interesting, though, is that after taking over the post of Tory leader, he said that the Conservatives would never leave the European Parliament to have an impact on EU policies (Butler, 2005, p. 85). Howard thought that Europeans should build a flexible Europe where the issue of a common currency and constitution would not be imposed from above. Thus, the then Conservative leader demonstrated clear opposition to the Blair government’s European integration policy, which supported, notably, the constitutional process in the EU. A feature of Howard’s Euroscepticism was the opposition to the further expansion of the EU after 2004, especially having rejected the potential accession of Turkey (Baimbridge, Whyman, Mullen, 2016, pp. 95–97). Apart from this, the politician campaigned for maximum decentralization in the EU, greater liberalization of the activities of its institutions and the termination of Britain’s participation in the Social Charter. Howard was a radical Eurosceptic who also actively promoted “Brexit” in 2016, having con-

vinced its supporters that “beyond the borders of the EU, Britain would be much better,” however, without specifying the reasons for it (Howard, 2016).

Howard was replaced, as time shows, by the more influential and ambitious Eurosceptic David Cameron (party leader, 2005–2016) in 2005. Many researchers consider him to be a faithful follower of Thatcher (Alexandre-Collier, 2015, pp. 1–2) although Cameron himself is not the supporter of such an opinion. He calls himself a “fan” of the “Iron Lady,” but denies belonging to the “Thatcherists” (Watts, 2012, p. 242). Nevertheless, due to his Eurosceptic position Cameron won the Tory leadership election (Lee, Beech, 2009, pp. 198–200). He promised to withdraw the Conservatives from the European Parliament parties, that Smith could not do, and Howard refused to do. The new leader of the Conservatives was opposed to the expansion of the powers of the EU’s governing bodies, and therefore strongly rejected the implementation of the Lisbon Treaty, which in fact replaced the EU Constitution and established the post of President of the EU (the President of the European Council is sometimes referred to as the “President of the European Union”) and made other institutional changes. At the time when all the EU member states ratified the document, Cameron called it an act of betrayal by the Labour government in 2009 (Summers, 2009). At that time, in 2007, Gordon Brown (Prime Minister, 2007–2010) – an ally of Tony Blair, was heading to be elected leader of the Labour Party and become Prime Minister. Although Brown was less optimistic than his predecessor, he did not demonstrate Eurosceptic behavior and views. When there was a proposal from the Conservatives to hold a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty, Brown rejected it. Some researchers consider this position to be “historic – when the Prime Minister refuses to involve British society in discussing a very important document” (Gardiner, McNamara, 2008).

In response to Brown’s behavior, Cameron said that if the Conservatives won the next election, they would apply for an amendment to the Treaty on the European Union to prohibit the increase of powers of EU institutions without national referendums (Summers, 2009). It was not difficult to predict that the reluctance to hold a referendum on the Treaty of Lisbon would not serve Brown in the parliamentary elections in 2010. The Conservatives duly won the majority of votes for the first time in ten years, but due to the lack of seats in Parliament, they had to form a government led by Cameron in coalition with the Liberal Democrats. The Eurosceptic rhetoric of Cameron, mostly since 2009, the year before

parliamentary elections, was based mainly on the idea of a referendum on the Lisbon Treaty in the EU (Muz, 2016). He was convinced that this document was nothing more than an attempt by European Commissioners to adopt an EU Constitution in disguise, and which had failed in 2004 (Muz, 2016).

Thus, Cameron categorically opposed the increase in the powers of EU bodies and the creation of new institutions such as the institution of President and Minister of Foreign Affairs, as envisaged by the Treaty of Lisbon. Exploring his public speeches, one may notice that he had a certain fear that the EU could go beyond the borders of democratic power and then, according to his vision, it would be too late to do anything. This was the reason that Cameron favored a “flexible Union” in which member states would respect and value national identity more, and the national powers of the member states would remain unchanged (Adams, Fabbrini, Larouche, 2014, p. 317). Having become Prime Minister, Cameron said that he had been sceptical about the EU because the EU had been trying to transform itself into a centralized management machine (Rennie, 2011). It is also the case that Cameron was one of the few politicians, who publicly called himself “Eurosceptic” (Rennie, 2011). According to him, his scepticism was due to the EU developing in the wrong direction: “There is less growth, fewer jobs and less competitiveness” (Adams, Fabbrini, Larouche, 2014, p. 317).

In addition, he strongly opposed the accession of Britain to the eurozone and the deepening of European integration processes, which in his opinion, undermined the national interests of the United Kingdom. In particular, this was concerned with the migration problem, which was the product of multiculturalism which, in his words, created “separate communities within the EU that were completely counter to British values” (Race, 2015, 129). We can reach the conclusion that Cameron’s Euroscepticism had its roots in the field of national security. As far as the author of this paper is concerned, he considers Cameron to be a moderate Eurosceptic, because he never agitated for Brexit and he wanted the EU to be a “successful project” instead (Adams, Fabbrini, Larouche, 2014, p. 317). But, according to Cameron, it was possible only with the above conditions.

During the 2015 parliamentary elections, the Prime Minister announced his intention to hold a referendum on Britain’s membership of the EU by the end of 2017 (Sabin, 2015). However, it happened a bit earlier. The referendum was held in June 2016, in which 51.2% of voters voted for the UK’s exit from the EU (Bloomberg, 2016).

Thus, Cameron succeeded in achieving the Eurosceptic wishes of many Conservatives who were the leaders of the government, or leaders of the opposition, and even some in the Labour party. Obviously, Cameron became a hostage of a difficult set of circumstances in the EU related to the migration crisis. It is likely that under more favorable conditions he would not have initiated the referendum. All in all, the crisis in the EU and his earlier promises forced the head of government to take such a step.

### **Conclusions**

The study shows that there were no systematic Proponents of Euroscepticism in the UK: neither among the Conservatives, nor among Labour party members. In general, the results of the study are ambiguous.

Firstly, if one makes a comprehensive analysis of the supporters and Proponents of Euroscepticism, one can notice that their majority comes from the Conservative Party. Among the key Eurosceptics among the Tories were Churchill, who initiated the line of Euroscepticism in this party, Anthony Eden, Margaret Thatcher, who, through her “iron” policy, became the ideological inspiration behind Euroscepticism, Norman Tebbit, John Major, Michael Portillo, John Redwood, William Hague, Iain Duncan Smith, Michael Howard, and finally David Cameron, who successfully completed the joint Eurosceptic, and sometimes even anti-Europeanist efforts of them all. The most influential of the Eurosceptics were Churchill, who created the trend for Euroscepticism, and Thatcher, who laid the foundations for Euroscepticism.

The Labour Party, apparently, has fewer Eurosceptics. Among them the most visible and influential were Clement Attlee, Herbert Morrison and Hugh Gaitskell. They had the greatest influence on British politics in the early 1950s and were ready to do anything to prevent their country from participating in the establishment of the ECSC and the EEC.

Secondly, despite the fact that British Eurosceptics belong to different ideological (party) camps, their Euroscepticism, strangely enough, is based on the same principles: Britain is not Europe, therefore, it has no place in the unifying processes; the ECSC (the EU) will become an empire/superstate, where all the decisions will be taken at the center; Britain will lose influence; membership of the EU will be the beginning of the end of Britain; the EU is a threat to Britain’s national security through

the rise of terrorism, the spread of drugs and the increase in the number of illegal immigrants. All British Eurosceptics were also against a federated Europe, a single currency and joint citizenship of the EU, collective taxation and the creation of an EU army, a joint constitution and Turkey's membership of the EU and against enlargement of the EU and the powers of EU institutions.

Thirdly, despite the high level of Euroscepticism and the significant number of influential Eurosceptics and anti-Europeanists, the United Kingdom joined the EEC in 1973, signed the SEA in 1986 under the leadership of, incidentally, the Eurosceptic Thatcher, and finally, on its own terms, the UK became a co-founder of the modern European Union. However, we should not diminish the role of Eurosceptics in British politics. The above mentioned political figures affected the fact that Britain did not join the Schengen agreement and did not adopt the Social Chapter of the EU Treaty (at first). They also actively fought against the adoption of the EU Constitution and eventually demanded a referendum on the UK's exit from the EU. The UK's exit from the EU does not mean the end for British Eurosceptics. They will criticize the EU, but no longer as members of this Union, like before the entry of the UK into the EEC and EU (if Britain comes out of the EU). Therefore, the list of Eurosceptics will definitely extend.

Fourthly, in the course of the study, the author formed his own typology of Euroscepticism, according to which he distinguished moderate (for example, Churchill, Major and Hague) and radical (for example, Attlee, Thatcher and Smith) Euroscepticism. The topic of the types of Euroscepticism is a separate issue, so the author will conduct the analysis in his next study.

Fifthly, the author discovered that Redwood can be considered the theoretician of contemporary British Euroscepticism, on account of his books which aim to criticize the EU, as well as due to his open Euroscepticism. This statement, however, also requires further research.

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## Zwolennicy eurosceptycyzmu w Wielkiej Brytanii w latach 1950–2017

### Streszczenie

Autor niniejszego artykułu bada kwestię obecności zwolenników eurosceptycyzmu w Wielkiej Brytanii w latach 1950–2017. Autor twierdzi, że pierwszym eurosceptycznym szefem rządu był Winston Churchill i utrzymuje, że eurosceptycyzm nie jest zjawiskiem powiązanym z jakąkolwiek partią polityczną, lecz zjawiskiem o charakterze ponadpartyjnym, nieposiadającym ścisłego związku z konkretną ideologią. Jednocześnie zauważa, że największy odsetek eurosceptyków w Wielkiej Brytanii występuje wśród konserwatystów. W toku rozważań zawartych w artykule, autor identyfikuje głównego teoretyka współczesnego brytyjskiego eurosceptycyzmu, a także wyodrębnia umiarkowany i radykalny wariant eurosceptycyzmu.

**Słowa kluczowe:** Unia Europejska, eurosceptycyzm, brexit

